2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1936) 1939 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

by Blom and LaFarge.[37] At Tenejapa and again at Guaquitepec, Villa met persons terrified by fears of witchcraft; it is apparent that the subject is important throughout the region. The word for witch is *agchamel*, and the phrase used is to the effect that the witch "eats" his victim. Villa understood this to refer to the belief that a person's soul may be lured away from his body, a notion consistent with facts reported by Blom and LaFarge.[38]

Villa's notes establish the fact that the nineteen-month pagan calendar is in current use in the highlands, at least in Chanal, Cancuc, and Oxchuc. In 1702 Nuñez de la Vega [39] published the names of twenty days of the month; these have apparently not been reported since. In 1845 Emeterio Pineda [40] gave for the first time (but for the Tzotzils) the names of the months, omitting only the name *chayquin* for the five-day period. In 1888 Vicente Pineda [41] furnished a complete list of the months for the Tzeltals. Villa was informed that the month *Yaxkin* ended in November so that the new year would begin in the second week of January. Starr [42] says that the first twenty-day period (*Tzin*) begins January 1. Becerra [43] says that the year should begin with the winter solstice. However, he gives, based on information received from the Indians themselves, a table [44] correlating the variations from village to village; thus, the month *Batzul*, first of the year, begins in Oxchuc on January 1, in Cancuc on the second and in Tenejapa on the third. Furthermore, according to this author, there is a marked difference between the correlation followed by the Tzeltals and that followed by the Tzotzils; thus the month *Olalti* [45] begins among the Tzeltals on March 27 and among the Tzotzils on April 12. The list of months Villa secured differs from both Starr's and Pineda's list, but agrees with that of Becerra.

Batzul	(Time of harvest)
Zakilab	(Clearing the milpa begins)
Agelchac	(The clearing continues)
Mac	(Time of sowing)
Olalti	(Time of sowing)
Jul-ol	(Time of sowing)
Uec-cachaquin	(No work)
Joquen-ahau	(Time of sowing in the tierra caliente)
Chin-uch	(Time of weeding)
Mucul-uch	(Time of weeding)
Juc-uinquil	(Time of resting)
Uac-uinquil	?
Jo-uinquil	?
Chan-uinquil	?
Ox-uinquil	?
Pom (Octubre)	(When the new ear forms)
Yax-kin (termina con Noviembre)	?
Mux	?
Tzun	?

[37] Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2:369–371.
[38] *Ibid.*, 2:371.
[39] Nuñez de la Vega, 1702.
[40] Emeterio Pineda, 1845, p. 111
[41] Vicente Pineda, 1888, pp. 130–131.
[42] Starr, 1902, p. 177.
[43] Becerra, 1933, p. 50.
[44] *Ibid.*, Table 8.
[45] *Ibid.*, Table 10.

3:Nash B-5 (1964-1965)1967
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682 epidemic (two cases), when people have drunk
[755] a great deal and their motive is fresh in their
[273] mind.

The settings in which homicides occur indi-
682 cate that a killer is expressing not his own
152 bravery but rather his fears. Wounds are fre-
154 quently inflicted from the rear, and often the
[273] victim is outnumbered and set upon by a group. The victim is sometimes invited to drink with his killer(s), and in this session he is disarmed psychologically and physically. Alcohol reduces the chance of his effective reaction, and this is important when a knife or machete is used. Shotgun killings are done at a distance and do not require this tactic, although it may still be employed. For drinking
682 serves to reduce the killer's own fears. Drink
273 "heats the blood" and makes unusual be-
152 havior possible. One killer, in recounting his act, was not trying to prove bravery, but rather his own good judgment and cool-headedness. The killer fired at the victim while he was sleeping, his back turned to the door, and killed him. The shot also entered the arm of the
[695] sleeping man's wife. She saw the killer as he
[683] left the scene, but testified in court that she had seen no one. She was, in effect, accepting his verdict that her husband was a witch.[4] This homicide was not regarded by the killer or by anyone else as a heroic act, nor was the killer in recounting it attempting to emphasize anything other than the necessity of the act.

682 411 *Instrumentality: Weapons and Wounds*

gun	14
machete	6
gun and machete	4
knife	3
knife and gun	1
knife and machete	1
knife and stone	1
hatchet	1
nail	1
sandals	1
??	4

The variety of weapons reduces the question of any technological determinism to a minimum. The actual weapon used seems to be a matter of convenience. When more than one is used, it is usually evidence that the assailant had helpers. The nail is unusual. It was hammered into the jaws of a man who had entered the curing profession at an age considered too
682 young. The attack on the jaws of the victim
• 774 seems related to the power of speech and to the
056 [text continues on p. 461-B]

3rMash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
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682 794 756 location of the soul, *sč'sulel*, in the tongue, *yut*, wherein lies the particular power of the curer. This possibly suggested the mode of attack.

682 411 412 [223] [224] The instruments used to kill are carried by the farmers of this area most of the time. The men go to their milpa with a machete strapped to their side, a shotgun slung over their shoulder, and sometimes even a knife stuck in their waistband. They frequently interrupt work to hunt birds, rabbits, and deer. The shotgun does not excite suspicion or comment when it is seen. The men of Teklum are technologically prepared to kill in the course of an ordinary day's work.

682 [152] [683] The number of wounds and the thoroughness with which the job is done (see Table 1) suggest not so much the fury of the assailants as the fear motivating their act. In a witch-killing, it appears to be thought necessary to hack up the victim completely so that his power is effectively ended: one witch was cut into 32 pieces; another had 166 wounds.

682 674 656 The death acts drawn up in the local courthouse have been increasingly specific in their statements as to the wounds inflicted ever since the government's intervention in the case of an accidental death in 1950. The local authorities were threatened with a fine of 600 pesos if the details were not properly recorded. The careful measurement of the body in relation to the road and to neighboring milpas and the measurement of the size and depth of the wounds provide the screen of complicity that wards off further investigation by federal authorities and preserves local independence. There is never any questioning of suspects or attempt to solve the crime by officials. The success of the ploy is illustrated in the following account:

> Pedro had animals at the spring and had gone out early with ropes in his bag to lasso them. He was found with a rope tied around his neck hung from a *tibinal* tree. We went out and measured the length and thickness of the rope and how many centimeters it penetrated his neck. We put all these facts in the report, which gave the cause of death as suicide.
>
> At that time we had a schoolteacher in town who asked the dead man's wife why the town didn't investigate who killed him because someone must have done it. He went with the widow to the Ministerio Publico in the capital. Well, when they came out, there were all the facts in the death act. [Informant laughed heartily as he recalled this success.] He saw that we had discovered the body at 3 P.M., that the rope was 15 meters

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625 The "police force", made up of ten
626 Indians of the town who served without pay for a year, acted as errand boys more than as guardians of public safety. The townspeople conformed to the cultural code of behavior because of a sense that their welfare was being cared for.

626 More recently, the breakdown of certain
178 structural features and competition between
756 new and old leaders have undermined non-
[128] violent methods for the maintenance of social control. These changes will be discussed in terms of (1) the organization of the curing profession, (2) conflict between the curers and the civil authority, and (3) how both the curing profession and the civil authority are affected by the breakdown of the old dual division of the town.

[124] (*1*) *Organization of the curing profession.* Perception of structural changes in the curing profession and their effect on attitudes are indicated in the following statement by an informant:

> Formerly there were not many curers. Only two—one in the low side and the other in the high side. They alone spoke together. They walked every night, looking and watching over the pueblo to see that no illness was brought in, checking to see who was bringing it and to see if there was any illness of God [reference to contagious diseases]. They saw which of the children had a soul
> • [194] [reference to the third soul, the swayohel or animal spirit, which gives the power to cure and to do evil].
>
> If anyone wanted to be cured, they bathed them, cured them, and in a little while people got better because there was good illness only. If later on it turned into a disease of the devil, with their animal spirit they seized the force of the illness.
>
> When there was a contagious disease, and a witch "brought heat," and the children began to die, the two curers alone consulted and waited to see who had brought the evil and where they lived. One of them went to the town hall and gave an account of the fact that they had taken care of the evil and gotten rid of it. It was not necessary to gather together the pueblo—only the two knew what was the matter and how to care for it.
>
> The [two] leader curers of each section [*stsatal ʔuʔuletik*] alone ordered other curers. No one else could enter curing until permitted by the leaders. They continued in power until they died, and then one of the younger curers took over.
>
> Beginning in 1940, more curers started to enter on their own accord. The elder curer had died, and his successor was not recognized. People saw that someone could pulse, and so they would ask him to cure.
>
> Now when there is an epidemic, the president

844 cloves, and corncake, to keep her "warm
[757] and fertile." The placenta can be burned,
[842] thrown to the dogs, or deeply buried in case
the mother does not want another preg-
[789] nancy soon. The umbilical cord is put under
a three-stone fireplace if the baby is a girl,
on top of a tree if it is a boy so that he may
become brave and agile when adult.

846 A few hours after childbirth, at the latest
515 the next day, both mother and child take a
temascal (steam bath). Some women stay
in the temascal until they feel completely
recovered.

Childhood and Adolescence

789 During the first weeks of life, children are
774 in danger of losing their souls because their
inexperience makes them an easy prey to
the naguales and bad spirits who wander
[237] around. As protection, mothers place a small
piece of beeswax at the back of the child's
head or tie, as a bracelet, a red or blue
thread around the wrist. If none of these
precautions are taken, the mother has to
cover with branches the paths her child
walks, so that his soul can easily find its way
in case he loses it.

789 Because of all these dangers, fathers al-
852 ways try to perform the ceremony of "seed
774 the soul of the child" as soon as possible. It
[553] is during this ceremony that the child is
given a name, later confirmed according to
[608] Catholic ritual at the ceremonial center. A
very important aspect of the ceremony is
selection of the godparents.

753 *Sickness and Death*

776 Most sicknesses come from infection or
[888] malnutrition. To the natives, however, ill-
nesses have a supernatural cause and are
ascribed either to the anger of gods and
spirits or to old people who have a nagual
or who can throw a spell. The most frequent
explanation is that naguales or supernatural
beings are acting against people. They can
adopt human or animal form or appear as

[P 224-A]

753 776 [794] [888] [613] thunder, wind, or lightning. All the men who occupy or have occupied cargos in the political or religious organization are supposed to have a nagual, as do the older members of the lineage. They consider it their duty to punish those members of the group who have sinned and use their nagual, who can devour the soul of the victim little by little.

774 776 According to this idea, everybody has two souls: one which can be eaten by the naguales, and one which follows the destiny that its patron saint has planned for it. 761 775 776 When death comes, the naguales take away the first soul and have a banquet up in the mountains. In this feast, the naguales of the old people of the clan participate, joined by others induced to comradeship.

761 773 776 It is a widespread belief that at midyear the naguales go to a place in heaven called Atimaltik, where an old man who possesses the Book of Life lives. Since in this book he keeps account of the time each person can live, it is a source of information for the naguales, who thus can know who is close to death. When the signature of a person disappears from the book, this means that the person died.

764 People have to keep watch over the body for two days and two nights. It is placed on a wooden plank in the middle of the house after being washed or just given a change of clothes. Two candles are placed at the head. At night friends and neighbors come to keep company with the family. They play harp and guitar and drink chicha and aguardiente. At dawn, the men go home and the women remain crying near the corpse.

[613] [184] Following the ancient custom, the dead are buried near the graves of other men of the same lineage. In Cancuc, however, dead are buried inside the house.

The bottom and sides of the grave are covered with slabs to form a coffin. The corpse, bundled up in a petate, is placed inside. His clothes and other articles he may

[P. 224-B]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

he is whipped by the girl's father for a thief. The girl is stripped to the waist and whipped by her mother. With this the marriage is legalized. As the first act of their true married life, the girl makes posole and offers it to her parents. The boy is under obligation to bring presents of bread, chocolate, aguardiente, etc., to his parents-in-law.

There are no formal restrictions of marriage, but the Church exercises a general influence against wedding brother and sister, cousins, or other relatives forbidden by Christian doctrine. In this, owing to the disposition of the Indians, and to the purely tribal character of marriage, which is not regarded by them as a religious or governmental matter, the Church is only partially successful. Informal unions actually do occur between brother and sister, apparently without any ceremony, the pair merely continuing to live together, their family relationship slowly changing into that of a married couple. That such a wife's status has some regularity in their eyes is shown by the fact that she has the same position in funeral rites as an ordinary wife.

It is probably due to the negative influence of the Church that the various important crises in the life of an individual, ordinarily marked by such colourful ceremonies among primitive people, here are distinguished by very little of ritualistic observance. For description of the main events in the life course, we were again dependent on Señor Tovilla, whose information, given with little change below, checked entirely with the result of other inquiries. The funeral ceremonies were observed at first hand, after the fight described at El Encanto; for them, accordingly, I have used my own notes.

When a woman is about to give birth to a child, a midwife—an older woman with some knowledge of herbs—is summoned. A few days before parturition, the woman is carefully tended by the midwife, well fed with choice food, and provided with a little rum. At the moment of giving birth, the midwife prays that the child may be brought forth happily. The mother kneels, and the midwife prepares to receive the child with a new cloth. Meantime the father is told to stay outside the house, or may be allowed to help in minor matters.

It is said that at Tenejapa the women go out into the woods to give birth untended, coming back with the child.

The baby is given Christian baptism.

A child's soul is considered to be particularly delicate, and therefore liable to magic influence. If the people of the house must go

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

fragments of prayers to him will be given when discussing medicine. Distinct from the guardian of the cornfields, he is known only by name to the ordinary Indians, and mention of him appeared to alarm them a good deal.

Drunkenness still retains some of its old, ceremonial significance, in its association with fiestas, funeral rites, and particularly with medicine, under which head it will be more fully taken up.

There are a number of beliefs and practices, no matter what their origin, which, as they exist today, must be considered as superstitions rather than religion. Of such a type is the belief mentioned when speaking of hunting, that painting the bullet red would make it go further. This is of interest in the study of survivals, in view of the importance of the colour red in pre-Christian times. It may be equally well argued, however, that the red in this case represents the blood of the animal to be slain. Most of the superstitions are concerned with the *nagual* or the soul.

The set of ideas that constitute Nagualism is derived from ancient and important beliefs. The *nagual, tcul-el* (*tcul*, "holy," *-el* "the, the one"), is a companion-spirit to a man, taking the form of some animal. The stronger the *nagual*, the stronger the man, thus one with a jaguar for a familiar could work any kind of magic or other harm on one with a rabbit. We were told both that the *nagual* was assigned by popular consent, due to people's opinion of a man, and that it was seen in a dream. A man who has a quarrel with another will deliberately shoot animals of the species of the other's *nagual*, hoping to hit the particular one associated with his enemy. If that one dies, the man dies, and vice versa. Thus, it is plain that there is no idea of association with a whole class of animals, but only with one individual of a class.

According to Nuñez de la Vega,* in the seventeenth century the *nagual* was assigned by a shaman, who took it from the name of the day on which the individual was born. The child was later caused to see his *nagual* . . . *"se abrazan cariñosamente con su nagual, que por arte diabólica se le apparece muy doméstica y supersticiosamente cariñosa, aunque sea una bestia muy feroz, como leon, tigre, etc."*† According to Sapper (1925) exactly the same practices obtain in Guatemala today, the animal being caused to appear by means of hypnotism.

It is possible that further investigation would show a similar manner of choosing the *nagual* among the modern Tzeltal. How-

*Nuñez de la Vega, 1702, loc. cit.
†Extract in Pantagrua, 1868, Page 97.

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

to admit to having a weak one would admit weakness in magic and all other things, and set one's enemies immediately to work with the certainty of success. 776 756

Although the idea prevails among the Ladino people of Chiapas that the *nagual* and the soul are the same, in reality they are quite distinct. The soul, *lap*, is conceived of as a separate possession, distinct also from the principle of life, both in its conception and etimologically ("life"—*kucul*). This soul is a delicate thing, easily lost, and the object of many ceremonial precautions. Apparently it dwells within the body, but may be jarred loose, or lost in whole or in part. 774

Apropos of this, the Yocotan curse, given in Volume I, Chapter VI, a prayer to get hold of a man's soul, shows a similar idea. The damage is not done by catching the soul, but by the magic that may be worked on the man after it is caught. Save for the immortality which the Indian enjoys through it after death, his soul may be regarded as much more of a liability than an asset.

If an Indian falls down, the shock of the fall loosens his soul. He must lie where he is until his companions, or the next comers, place a circle of little crosses of grass about him. They then sweep up the trail behind him, gathering the dust and placing it in a heap by his head. On this the grass crosses are burned, and the Indian, inhaling the smoke, regains his soul.

It should be mentioned that these are a very sure-footed people, who seldom fall, and that no importance is attached to falling down when intoxicated.

In case of severe fright, the soul is also thought of as jarred loose. To cure this, an egg or a chicken is buried at the spot where the fright occurred. There is some idea of fright being caused by a spirit that must be placated, an idea which is differently expressed in a custom described as common among the Chol Indians near Palenque. With them, if a child is frightened, the mother beats it soundly, meantime crying "Go away, devil, go away, devil!" (*Que sale el diablo!*") In this case fright is definitely a form of possession. It is part of a conception found among many of the Mayance tribes that there is something unnatural and supernatural about a sudden shock of this sort. Being startled must be distinguished from merely being afraid of something, which is considered entirely natural and comprehensible.

On the trail the Indians sleep on beds of palm leaves which take an impression of the sleeper's body. Before going on, these leaves must be shaken out, and should also be held over the smoke of the (513)

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9

774 [513] fire and then hung up to destroy the impression and prevent leaving behind with it a portion of the soul, on which magic could be worked. Our own observation was that this precaution was carelessly observed.

789 123 Although magic may be worked on impressions on leaves, bits of hair, earth from fields, etc., the Indians showed no objection at all to being photographed beyond a certain embarrassment, and very little to being drawn. Often they asked to be photographed, and at some villages posed readily for sketches.

756 Although, according to Nuñez de la Vega,* there were originally several classes of shamans among these tribes, at present they seem to have narrowed down to one medicine-man type. Primarily these are doctors, but in their practice they preserve certain priestly characteristics. 756 They have a real pharmacopeia, and Ladinos and occasional foreigners 757 who have tried their skill testify to the effectiveness of the medicines.† All their knowledge, however, is kept in greatest secrecy. Just enough medicine is administered at once for a dose, the shaman watching to see that it is consumed, and none held out for identification. Of these we were able to find out virtually nothing. Serpent fat, *junto-tcan*, is in common use as a rub for colds. Head-aches and extreme drunkenness are treated by cutting the forehead with a bit of sharp glass, and bleeding is resorted to in some other cases. The use of the tourniquet in cases of snake-bite is widely known.

All applications of medicine are accompanied by prayers recited in such a way as to be unintelligible to lay hearers. The prayers are an essential part of the treatment.

756 Shamans are trained from early infancy, being selected probably by the older practitioners. One of them takes the student in hand and teaches him prayers and medicines proper to his particular specialty. With this goes a certain amount of plain magic. Whether a man may then study under others and continue learning is not known; however, they vary in reputation both for their ability at curing, and for clairvoyance, casting spells, etc. Casting spells is a sort of reverse function of doctoring, the man who can cure disease being, obviously, able also to cause it.

[273] One of the two words given for a shaman, *poci'*, shows an interesting resemblance to the Tzeltal for rum, *poc*. This similarity gains importance in view of the real connection between curing and drinking. A shaman definitely will not perform unless he is more

*Op. Cit.
†Cf. Sapper, 1925.

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/For information on the acquisition of the third soul or swayohel by curers, see category 756./

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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The four sides of the square house are protected by palm crosses which were nailed to each of the four corner posts during the ceremony of the initiation of the house. These crosses prevent the entry of evil. A fifth cross on the door post, replaced each year on the Day of the Cross, ensures the guardianship of San Pedro the Martyr, the Lord of Lightning.[5]

The idea of the similarity in substance between a house and its inmates originates in the notions about soil (*lum*) and mud (*ʔal'al*). An origin myth concerning the creation of man indicates that God created man out of soil and this mythical identification is reiterated in prayers when the fleshy part of the body is referred to as *hlumeletik*, our soil, and *kal'aletik*, our mud. Whatever soil man comes into contact with—in his house, in the backyard, or in his travels, may contain some of his soul. This belief is demonstrated in the following practices: When a person's soul is lost because of a fright, such as falling or "seeing a spirit," the soil where the incident occurred is scraped into a shirt or skirt belonging to him and deposited in the soil below the head of his bed. Some older informants say that the soil from beneath the bed is scraped up and deposited in the coffin of a deceased inmate of the house, but I have never seen this done. This intimate relation between soul and soil was best illustrated to us when our landlord refused to let us put a cement floor in the interior of his house since it would interfere with the practices described above and other customs in the house ceremonies mentioned below.

The house is constructed in two stages. The completion of each stage requires a ceremony linking the spirits of the inmates to that of the dwelling. The first stage is the erection of the house posts and the wooden frame. When the roof is covered with wood shingles, thatch, or tile, the family may set up temporary walls of boards. They wait until the rainy season to complete the second stage of building up the walls with mud. The first ceremony, called "fiesta for the house," is for "the spirit which resides in the posts," and the second, called "meal for the house," is to feed "the spirit of the house earth." People believe that the mud walls, like their fleshy counterpart, the human body, require nourishment.

5. San Pedro Martyr is referred to by the Indians as *Tatik Martil* and is identified with the pre-Conquest deity Lord of Lightning, or *Tatik Ča?uk*.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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spring. The gourd is used as a container for the springwater because, like all growing plants and unlike metal or glass containers, it has a soul. The soul of the tobacco plant is considered particularly strong. The smoke of the candles and incense are the media through which prayers to the spirit of the house are transmitted.

The house fiesta serves three functions: (1) introducing the spirit of the house inmates to the house spirit, (2) creating a harmonious setting for spiritual interaction of the members of the household and the house spirit, (3) protecting the house against the intrusion of evil. The introduction is achieved by brushing the household members with the branches from the spring, and the harmony is brought about by drinking liquor, playing the guitar, and dancing. The music of the seed gourd, the guitar, and sometimes a radio or phonograph makes the residents, their guests, and the house spirit happy, or "of one heart." Protection is insured by nailing the palm crosses representing the Lord of the Lightning to the house posts.

Second house fiesta ("meal for the house"). When a meal is given to the spirit of the house earth, the house is arranged as for the house fiesta with curing arches set in front of the center posts at the back and middle walls. The same guests are invited as for the first fiesta. The family buys a sheep and slaughters it in the morning by stringing it up to the center post by it paws and slashing its jugular vein. When the blood has drained into the square hole opened at the base of the center post, the curer removes the head and buries it in the hole. Some curers bury the four paws as well, while others prefer to add an offering of five pieces of bread in a new pottery jar, twenty measures of chocolate, thirteen cigarettes, and a bottle of liquor covered with a new cloth. The head of the sheep is placed so that the eyes look up to watch over the inhabitants. Some refer to it as the *me?iltatil,* identifying it with the curers (who are called me?iltatil in the context of guardianship) and thus with the ancestor guardians.

During the house fiesta I observed in July 1967, an old curer who had officiated at the first ceremony served again. A neighbor, who was not related to the houseowners but who was skilled in butchering, slaughtered

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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242 *Soil characteristics.* The potential productivity of flat irrigated lands is evaluated on the basis of two criteria: color of the soil and consistency of the soil. The preferred land for cultivation is the black loam mixed with some sand, (*ʔihk'al hiʔiletik lum*). The better, quicker growing corn seed is planted here. These very productive soils are called "hot" [822] [843] [842] lands (*k'išin lum*). (Heat is associated with fertility in both lands and people: a pregnant woman and her husband are considered to be in a state of heat, and the contrast state of being cold is attributed to someone who is sterile.) The red (*tzab'alum*) yellow (*k'analum*), and white soils (*sak lum*) are poorer soils and the slower seed is planted here. These soils are considered "cold" (*sik*) and are thought to be "tired."

The loss of soil productivity is attributed either to the loss of the soul of [774] the crop or to the fact that the soil gets "tired." Farmers have noticed that in the first five years of planting in Tulanca, the ejido land grant, the soil was "hot" and gave good crops. When this productivity was lost, people said the soul of the crop left. It is considered dangerous to start crops in the lower lands of hot country because when the location of crops is changed, the soul leaves its original residence. The notion of crop soul loss does not conflict with the awareness of natural causes of soil productivity. Fields are left fallow for four or five years when productivity diminishes and the soil is "tired." The irrigated lands are in continuous use because there is some replenishment of fertility with the overflow of the ditch waters. Cattle fertilizers are used sporadically. Those who have many head of [233] cattle construct corrals into which they herd the cattle each night. The location of the corral is changed yearly. Corn and beans are then planted in [596] the old corral with superior results. The dozen or so corrals in the town [476] are owned and worked cooperatively by extended families and are referred [551] to by the Indian patronyms—for example, *skoral Linetik* (corral of the Lins) or *skoral Čailetik* (corral of the Čailes). The one attempt to use [177] commercial fertilizers provided by the Ejido Bank proved a technical success but an administrative failure (chapter 3). Indians noted the increased yields, but none have attempted to purchase fertilizers.

Soil consistency is evaluated on the basis of how easy it is to work. Wet, sticky, or clayey soil (*ǰučilium*) and stony soil (*kešlum*) are least desirable. Sandy soil is easier to work, but soil productivity depends on a loam

mother the Moon gets angry. This might cause an eclipse of the moon, and the crops will suffer because there will be no sun.

There is no prohibition, however, against having sexual relations prior to planting or at other crucial stages, as there are for other Maya Indians (Wagley 1941:34).

During the growing season, candles are lit in the milpa as protection against wind as well as robbers, who "lose their luck" when this is done.

The spirits' care of the crops. The crops have souls, given by the spirits, which will be lost if they are not cared for. The spirits "watch over the crops as parents watch over their children." The term for seed (*yal*) is a metaphorical extension of the term for "child of a woman."

The following myths give different, occasionally contradictory versions of the origin of crops. This central truth emerges in all of them: The spirits have given us our crops and will continue to do so as long as we offer thanks in the form of ceremonies and gifts to them.

Santo Tomás [the patron saint of Oxchuk] had intercourse with Santa Lucía. She wanted [asked for] *the soul of corn, and he gave her the seed of corn. Then there came forth beans, corn, and wheat. But then all the saints of San Bartolo and San Miguel [neighboring towns] asked for the soul of corn. Then the soul of beans left us and went to hot country. Now it does not grow well in the pueblo. Also, the avocado has gone to Comitán. The matasano and ground beans went to Oxchuk when Santa Lucía fought with Santo Tomás.*

The myth of the origin of crops overlays an older myth which has parallels in other groups of Maya-speaking Indians (Castro 1965, Wagley 1941:20):

Formerly, during a famine, there was hunger. The tzisim, *an insect of Ariola, came to take the corn from underground. Thus the ancestors got their first seed. For this reason, people say that corn was born underground, brought up by the tzisim. But I believe God sent us corn.*

Another version has synthesized the role of the saints and that of the animal agent.

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The word for the act by which a tube of clay is formed, *ya sb'al*, has the connotation of creativity. In the *pat?o?tan*, a prayer form with many variations which introduces ceremonials, informants explain the terms *sb'al lum* and *sb'al ?at'al* as a reference to the creation of man's body formed out of soil and mud by the ancestors. Sometimes the verb *sb'al* is used instead of the usual word for planted, *tz'un*, to refer to the seeding of crops.

The parts of pottery are metaphorically equated to those of the body; the belly of the pot and the neck, ears, and mouth all have parallels in English metaphors. But among the Indians, pottery also has a soul. Metal or enamel containers do not have souls as do gourds and handmade pottery.

TABLE 11. Classification of Motions in Pottery Production

Motion *	*Step* †	*Context*
Sb'is + (smooth +)		
-mo?el (raise)	3.5	Pressing walls of base with curved index finger inside pot against flattened fingers outside, working clay upward
te yutil (inside)	6.4	Smoothing interior of vessel
ta snukel (its neck)	6.6	Smoothing neck with piece of leather
-b'e ščikin sok yal sk'ab (its ears with "child finger")	7.6	Smoothing handles on inside with little finger
-b'e ščikin sok sme? (its ears with "mother finger")	7.7	Smoothing handles on outside with thumb
Šyub' + (shape +)		
-šmo?el (raise)	5, 5.2, 5.8	Shape and raise pot upward
Tzak + (stick +)		
yah tzak (stick on)	4.1	Stick on tube of clay to hardened base
-šyubmo?el (shape and raise)	5.2	Stick on another tube of clay to side, shape it upward
šan (another)	5.6	Add another tube of clay to side
-b'e sti?il (mouth)	6.3	Add roll of clay to hardened mouth
-b'e ščikin (ears)	7.3	Add measured, flattened tube of clay to walls of pot for handles
Swol + (make a ball +)		

(*cont.*)

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model introduced was faulty or they were not taught to use it properly. Notions about the supernatural relation between souls of crops, man, and the saints do not interfere with experimentation or adaptation at the instrumental level. Obligations with respect to them are carried on as a supplement to other practical measures.

The organization of men's work in agriculture contrasts with that of women's work in pottery. Men's work, when performed cooperatively by two or more of an extended household or exchange labor team, is mechanically organized, in Durkheim's terminology. Each of the men does the same task, working closely in the rows of the milpa. Women's work groups are organically organized since segmentation of the pottery production in the stages described above makes possible specialization within a domestic production group including two or more women. Preferences and special abilities can be taken into account. The potters with more experience do the jobs which require more judgement and skill, such as mixing the clay or making the bases, and then the work is passed on to less proficient workers. Or an older woman can leave the more strenuous tasks, such as mixing clay or building up the sides of the larger pots, to younger women and perform the lighter tasks, such as putting on the neck and handles.

These differences in the organization of male and female work tasks suggest the need for a reformulation of the classification of whole societies as organically or mechanically integrated. In assessing the potential for change, internal variations in the organization of production might provide the clues for implementing development programs.

The division of labor according to sex is nearly absolute: women do not learn to work in the milpa nor do men learn to make pottery or perform household tasks. However, women will gather firewood, and men will transport clay (although they do not collect the clay deposits in balls) and help in firing pottery. Women can live without men in the household economy of the town, but men cannot live without women. This is because male labor is a market commodity while female labor in household activities is not. A widow can hire a man to work her fields, but a man cannot hire a cook. If he is widowed, he must remarry, move into his

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Chapter 5

Rituals of Life Crisis

571 608 602 The ceremonial occasions marking baptism, betrothal, and death define the network of bilateral relatives, neighbors, and compadres who will guide and help a person throughout his life. These people make up the group called me?iltatil. The constitute a corporate group, but one which is tied to a single transaction. The sense of corporate identity is strengthened by the same group being called upon to act in subsequent household celebrations. But for each set of me?iltatil there is almost always a different membership since the participants are selected for a particular event. The behavior during these ceremonials is marked by formality and replication of a limited number of ceremonial acts. Through this replication, the rituals dramatize continuity with the past and foster a sense of changelessness. The symbolic act establishing the bond is the embrace, called *sme?ispetb'ak*. Within the ritual setting, the child learns whom he can turn to for help and what he is expected to do in his home and community.

[192]

Baptism

852 774 After a month of seclusion when the child is hidden from public view, the soul is expected to have found its place in the child's body. A ceremony called *ki'n ha?* (water ceremony) then takes place with the mother and grandmother in attendance. The three enter the sweatbath, and the mother and child are bathed in hot water and then cold.

[192]

If the child cries frequently, it is suspected that his soul is still not firmly lodged and has been wandering in the streets where it encounters animal spirits that frighten him. This requires a soul-calling ceremony performed

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in the house in which he lives. The midwife, the only person present besides the mother, performs the ritual. She puts cold water in the child's mouth and then goes to the door, saying, "Enter if you arrive, little boy [or little girl]." Then she brushes the child with pine branches dipped in springwater, and smokes with incense of pitch pine the clothing which is then put on the child. The incense "makes a path for the soul to find the body of the child." As she does this, she says, "May your heart be one now that you are in the house." This ceremony is always performed when the child is born outside his parents' residence is order to guide his soul to its proper locale. Three days later, a ceremony called *sti? mut* (eat the chicken) takes place. Only women attend this meal. In one case I observed, the child's mother, her three sisters, mother, and husband's cousin attended. Each woman brings a peso's worth of bread, some chocolate, and ten tortillas. Two hens are cooked in boiling water, and the food is eaten by the women.

Baptism, called "throw the water" (*?ič ha?*) occurs as soon as possible after the new-born child's twentieth day of life. If the parents of the child live with either the mother's or the father's family, the grandparents will choose the godparent, or *padrino*. The actual decisions recorded for four families in Table 20 can be compared with statements of preference as to who should be godparents. People say they prefer nonrelatives ("We are not deceived by them"), people of the same section of the dual division ("We like to greet them in the street") and finally people of good reputation. The individual or couple chosen as godparent becomes *compadre* or co-parent to the parents of the child.

People seem to be successful in realizing the preferences they state. 81 percent of compadres are chosen from their own side of the dual division, and only 4 percent are chosen from out of town. 71 percent of compadres are chosen from among nonrelatives. A significant factor in the choice of compadres is maintaining good neighbor relations. Most families surround themselves with a ring of compadres which neutralizes both the fear of being the object of witchcraft and of being accused of witchcraft. Factors of wealth, prestige, and status positions—particularly that of fiscal—are also taken into consideration in choosing a compadre. Most of the padrinos of baptism are chosen from among older members of the community,

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suitable, the president and judges give permission to the curers to allow him to enter the profession at this time. The novice provides three liters of liquor which are drunk "in common" by the curers and the civil officials.

There is some evidence that, formerly, novice curers were asked to yield the soul of one of their children:

My dead husband was given permission by Julian Gomex, the leader of the curers of Ahk'olnantik, to enter the curing profession. When my husband told me he wanted to cure, he said that Julian had asked him for a child "for the ancestors to eat." My husband was going to give a child of his brother since we didn't have any, but I said it would be a pity. Then he said he would give trago. This he did. I forget how many liters.

When the contagion came, the curers went to take out the heat. A policeman called my dead husband, and he went. The policeman said the leading curer had called him. The judges told him, "It is better for you to enter in common with the other curers."

He began to cure. The curers then asked what offering we were going to give.

"We have no children," said my husband. "We will give you liquor. I cannot give my brother's child or my sister's children."

He must have brought them about ten or twelve liters of trago and two packs of cigarettes.

The third soul, swayohel, may be acquired, or one may be born with it. Those who acquire the third soul by capture of the soul of a dead person within twenty days after the death are considered to be potentially dangerous. They are more likely to use the soul for evil than those who have acquired it from the ancestors at birth. Swayoheles can be acquired from a saint named ʔAhau in the neighboring town of Oxchuk.[1] The following account illustrates how one asks this saint for a swayohel:

If you go to the saint with a black face named ʔAhau with two candles of twenty cents you can ask for a swayohel. You say, "I want one ʔulel that is very strong. I have an enemy. I need one." You sleep there, and wake

1. Lombardo Otero (1944:73) says that in Oxchuk, Mukulajau, or Chulajau, is identified with Trinidad, and is associated with the pigeon, which is the animal spirit of powerful curers.

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sulted with each other to determine who was bringing in the heat. They privately disposed of the evil by causing the evildoer to die of an illness. At the time of my stay, suspicion of the curers meant that a public hearing was held in the town hall to determine who the guilty person was; usually one of the curers themselves was suspected (Chapter 9).

The curers formerly demonstrated their beneficial power by bringing rain during a fiesta held in the cave of the ancestors. This is described by an informant:

When the pueblo lacked rain in the growing season of corn in May and June, the leading curers went with the other curers, the fiscal, the alfereces, the mayordomos, and the women prayer-reciters to the cave. All the women carried candles of a peso or fifty-cent size and incense burners. They drank a great deal of liquor at the mouth of the cave and then entered to dance. The mayordomos played the guitar, the drum, and flute as the women danced and the curers prayed to the me?tiktatik. There used to be a spring in this cave, people say, and the ancestors granted water from it when they were given a fiesta.

The last fiesta for rain occurred about 1950. The whole town contributed two pesos for the liquor and candles. The leading curer then was Juliano, a man recognized for his powers in curing and in bringing rain. He told the people that he spoke to the me?tiktatik who, he said, were dressed in the old style [a shirt worn over short cotton pants still used by older men of the town, and the handwoven hat worn by alfereces today]. The curers told the people that it would rain, and the afternoon of the fiesta, it came down hard.

There is no longer faith that the ancestors live in the cave, nor that the present curers could speak to them if they did.

The growing discontent with the curers, the suspicion that they are responsible for much of the witchcraft, is reflected in the account of an older informant.

The curer O. K. told me that the curers ate the spirits of sick people who were going to die. The sick people would come to ask the curers for

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medicine. But why should they ask for medicine if the curers were going to eat their souls as he told me? I asked him, "How do you eat their souls?" He said that the five or six curers would make a common meal. They looked for a frying pan, and when it was well cooked, they would call all the curers and say, "Come, let us eat in common." When people came to ask for medicine, they would say, "Please, give us medicine." The curers would give the medicine, but the sick ones did not get well. The curers were only deceiving them. How could they get well if they wanted to eat their souls? They only wasted their money.

It is this that O. K. said to me. He told me himself that he had eaten the souls. Then I felt that he was bad because of what he himself had told me. To this day, I believe that he himself did the evil to his patients.

The personality of the curer. In view of the hazards of entering the curing profession and the low material rewards, the question of what motivates a curer to practice is of some interest. The older curers claim that God spoke to them in a dream and made known His desire that they cure. They conceive of it as a responsibility to the people, and maintain that their power comes from God. This contradicts parallel statements made by the same curers that their power comes from their swayohel. The younger curers say that the curers of their side selected them because they saw that they had a swayohel.

Direct questioning yields only limited understanding of what motivates these extraordinary people. The behavior of some of the curers reveals facets of the role which could not be elicited from them in questioning. Curers are able to defy tenets of the moral code of the community which stress softness and slowness, a moderation which is fundamentally based on fear of the world of spirits and of men. When drunk, the curers brag about their strength and fearlessness. They try to avoid the usual negative sanctions to such behavior by asserting the strength of their swayoheles and their imperviousness to harm.

My elder brother Albino was drinking with the dead Nicolás, leader of the curers of Alannantik. When both were half drunk, my elder brother asked Niholás what swayohel he had.

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People who fail to conform to the customs of the town are said to lack "reason." This category includes those who do not attend to the advice of their elders. People from outside of town who do not behave in conventional patterns are said to be "of another sort."

Institutionalized patterns of behavior differ as to the degree of explicitness of the association between action and reason. Curing practices are most directly attached to an understanding of why they are performed. Ritual practices in the cult of the spirits are tied to a more general explanatory system in which something should be done "because it was the custom of our ancestors."

Competency. Judgments concerning the intelligence of a person and his ability to adjust to his social and physical environment complement the criteria of morality and reasonableness. Alertness, or intelligence is associated with the possession of more than one soul: a person may have from one to a dozen additional souls. Curers and witches, by virtue of their possession of an animal spirit, are by definition very intelligent. Evaluations of alertness are often made in discussing the personalities of others. In the myth concerning the three brothers and the honey (Chapter 8) God, the Elder Brother, was described as "not very bright," Jesus Christ, the Second Brother, as "a little brighter," and the Holy Ghost, the Youngest Brother as "the brightest." Alertness is usually associated with manipulation for one's own advantage, but is not necessarily antithetical to having a good heart. In the myth mentioned above, the youngest brother outwits his two older brothers to his own advantage, and coincidentally that of the world.

The word *b'ol* is used figuratively to express the opposite of alertness, stupidity. Literally it means one who is mute; the connection is significant. A child born mute is said to have had its soul stolen at birth so that he must exist without speech. The power of speech is highly valued and the prestigeful roles are accorded to those who can speak well in both formal and informal exchanges. It is a dangerous skill, since the ability to talk to the gods gives an advantage to the speaker over the general population. The ability to speak to the earth, a talent which people say the ancestors possessed and which curers in the neighboring town of Chamula still

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554 these role-bearers have other functions to perform, but the term specifies the most significant of these. Other people may unofficially perform these acts but only the officially appointed person has the other prerequisites for and duties of the role.

3. Recruitment into roles depends on age and sex qualifications. Validation of the role emphasizes, in addition to these ascribed characteristics, innate capacity rather than acquired ability. For example, the curers who are respected are assumed to have been born with an animal spirit, while those who are believed to have acquired it are suspected of being witches. Similarly, high civil officials are expected to be innately clever, not just trained for office.

828 4. Evaluation of performance emphasizes the state of the heart and qualifies judgments of the person according to characteristics of the mind and of the soul. The heart governs emotions such as contentment or inner turmoil and determines the moral relations a person has with others. The mind enables a man to deal effectively in his instrumental activities so that he can speak and work well. Possession of a [774] second soul means that one is clever and capable, but it is the third soul which gives power over the life and death of others. The exchange of [764] evaluations about others is a crucial area of concern in the tense atmosphere dominated by fear of whichcraft. In the belief that their very sur- [156] vival depends upon knowledge of the intent of others before it is expressed in witchcraft, the people constantly consult with relatives, compadres, neighbors, or the curers, in order to anticipate changes in their relations with others.

681 5. Sanctions against behavior that fails to meet role expectations depend on the seriousness of the crime rather than on the attitude of the criminal. This means that compensation relieves the wrong-doer of any guilt burden. Most compensation, even for homicide, can be translated into cash payment.

156 6. Ceremonial behavior in everyday interaction as well as in [554] ritual serves to limit the personal involvement in the encounter and to emphasize the role category. This is particularly emphasized in the [273] initial stage of the encounter. Liquor and cigarettes introduce a more [276] informal behavior in which the etiquette of reserve can be relaxed.

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627 Many cases of adultery never go outside the fences of the sitio, and many witchcraft cases come to the Ayuntamiento only after a murder has been committed in "revenge," in which case the Ayuntamiento is only called in to re-establish order and calm down the relatives of the deceased, trying to avoid further revenge and bloodshed.

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796 The Mayordomos, on the other hand, have no control over the household Saints which are "owned" by each family and kept in the house in a special altar, nor do they relate directly, within the Church organization, to the many supernatural beings which populate the belief system of the villagers. The "owners of the hills," spirits which inhabit the caves, rivers and wells, the mythological creatures such as the Sombrerón (frightening ghost which appears to tempt people in isolated spots) or Juan Lopez (the local culture hero), and the evil and powerful souls of witches
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776 are in a separate domain. These can be controlled only by the curanderos, who have powerful souls, or by the principales. This last group (principales) is also "in charge" of taking care of the health of the village, and do so by having their own souls patrol the boundaries of the community at night and by forbidding entrance to sickness and plagues. The men capable of such supernatural performances "own" animal spirits (nahuales) which help them in their task. Mayordomos, on the contrary, can be men without such powers, and do not need to belong to the select group which deals with the supernatural outside the realms specified by the Catholic Church.

000 The communal offices of the Ayuntamiento and Mayordomías